Pastoral Letters,

Directed to the

PROTESTANTS

IN

FRANCE,

Who Groan under the

Babyloniſh Captivity.

Tranſlated out of the French.

With Allowance.

LONDON,

Printed for Jo. Hindmarſh, at the Golden Ball in Cornhill. 1688.

THE PREFACE.

THE violent Perſecution raiſed in France *againſt the Proteſtants of that Kingdom, eſpecially after the Revocation of the Edict of* Nantes, *having made ſo much noiſe in the World, and afforded matter of aſtoniſhment to all Chriſtendom, I have wondered oftentimes, that none ſhould take in hand the tranſlating of Monſieur* Jurieu's *Paſtoral Letters in this Tongue, to acquaint the World with the Methods made uſe of in the bringing the Proteſtants of that Country to the Church of* Rome. *They are ſo extraordinary, that future Ages will hardly give credit to the Hiſtory of this preſent Perſecution, e-*

ſpecially when they ſhall conſider, that thoſe who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, caſt off all the Principles of Morality, degenerate into brute Beaſts, devour reaſonable Creatures, their Fellow-Subjects, Chriſtians, for no other reaſon, but for not believing as they do.

This you will ſee in Monſieur Jurieu's *Letters, in which he gives a particular, and ſo faithful an Account of all the Matters of Fact, as they occur in the Series of the Perſecution, that he leaves no room to queſtion at all what he advances; for he takes a particular care to be well informed of the Truth, before he commits any thing to the Preſs; and moſt commonly he receives his Memoires (as you ſhall ſee) either from thoſe who made their eſcape out of the hands of their Enemies, or from them who are actually involved in the Perſecution, which we may reaſonably believe to be true, being*

being not likely, that People who ſuffer for ſo an holy Profeſſion as the truth of the Goſpel of Chriſt is, would blemiſh it with Lies, and wrong their own Conſciences with them; or from the Papiſts themſelves, whoſe Letters fall ſometimes into his hands. He gives at large the Hiſtory of the Sufferings, Behaviour, and Death of our Martyrs and Confeſſors. He anſwers the Cavils, the Arguments and Sophiſtry of the Converters, eſpecially the Biſhop of Meaux, *ſo much applauded now a-days; and thus he enables and inſtructs the ignorant, ſtrengthens the weak, confirms the ſtanding, exhorts thoſe that are fallen, comforts the afflicted, and ſpeaks ſutably to all the Proteſtants, according to the Circumſtances they may lie under. In a word, it is the Learned and Pious Monſieur* Jurieu *whoſe Letters I tranſlate; the mention of whoſe name is ſufficient to recommend them to the publick. He begun to write them in* September, 1686; *and has ever ſince*

continued,

continued, and continues ſtill. He gives one every Fortnight; but if one every Week ſhould come out here, he might quickly be overtaken.

The

The First

PASTORAL LETTER:

WHICH

Treats of the Methods of Converſion which are made uſe of at this day in *France.*

Dearly Beloved in the Lord, the Grace and Peace of our God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt be with you all.

BE aſſured, that we are Fellow-ſufferers with you, and that from the Haven, into which, by Divine Providence we are caſt, we cannot without Lamentation and Tears behold the mighty Storms and Tempeſts which toſs you, and have occaſioned the Wreck of the Ship in which we were imbarked. We are very ſolicitous, as in duty we are obliged, conſidering both your and our Circumſtances, what to do for your conſolation, and to preſerve you from the danger of being ſeduced. But we

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ſee little probability of this; ſo that till it pleaſe God to open the Doors, which are at this time ſhut, we are reſolved to ſpeak to you afar off, in hopes that God will not delay to give us an opportunity to entertain you nearer. But let us haſten to that which is of greater moment. We do not believe that the Croſs of Chriſt Jeſus which you bear, is the greateſt of thoſe Evils you are expoſed unto, that is your Glory. And we perceive by Letters that come from thoſe who are ſtedfaſt in the Faith, God is their Comforter, he has prevented our Deſires, and given ſucceſs to our Exhortations, tho at a diſtance from you; nay, he is gone beyond our hopes, and hath wrought immediately upon your hearts without us, and he is in you a living Fountain of Bleſſings and Comforts, more abounding than we could hope. We receive from our Confeſſors who are in Fetters, in the Galleys, in Priſons a hundred feet deep, in Torments, in the dark and noyſom Dungeons; we receive, I ſay, from them Letters, which ſtrike us with admiration, which renew the time of the Primitive Chriſtians, and revive the ancient Martyrs, which ſhew us that the greater the Torments you are expoſed unto are, the more God hath indued you with ſtrength and courage, to overcome them.

What we are moſt afraid of for you, is your being

being Seduced; the many Examples we have already before our Eyes give us ſome apprehenſions for all the reſt. Some perſons which were accounted the Pillars of the Church, have proved broken Reeds. The Sophiſtry of the falſe Doctors, who ſet forth all their Cunning and Subtilty to Seduce, have Perverted the Underſtandings and the Hearts of many, from whom we expected an unſhaken Conſtancy. They ingage you in Diſputes, They Confound you with matters of Controverſie. They put Books into your Hands where Falſhoods are nouriſhed with all the colours of the Truth. They take from you all that could preſerve you from the Poyſon of thoſe Venomous Serpents, who are continually Hiſſing in your Ears. Our Hands being tyed, and our Mouths ſtopped, we have the grief to ſee the Sheep of our bleſſed Jeſus torn and plucked out from the Sheepfold, to be Tranſported into the Regions of the Prince of Lies and Darkneſs. What is to be done in this Caſe? It is needleſs to write any more Books. There are thouſands and thouſands already made; and ſome are newly come to light, in anſwer to the pernicious ſubtilties of thoſe falſe Doctors. They ſtrictly guard all the Paſſages of the Kingdom, that honeſt Men and good Chriſtians might not get out, and good Books might not enter in. If one ſhould

make new Books, the ſame Fate would attend them. The Publick would be troubled with repetitions, and you be without the comfort of receiving any benefit by them. If we muſt repeat, at leaſt it muſt be with ſome advantage to you. Wherefore we take in hand to write no more Books, but Letters. Perhaps God in his favour towards you, will make them fly over thoſe Rampiers, which the new Inquiſition has raiſed upon all the Avenues of the Kingdom; at leaſt there are ſome hopes they will more eaſily overcome the oppoſitions they make to the deſign we have to ſtrengthen you againſt their temptation.

We will give you theſe Letters every Month, or every Fortnight, ſometimes oftner according as things ſhall occur, and your neceſſities require. We ſhall endeavour therein to ſcatter the illuſions, which we know the Seducers make uſe of to deceive you. Among whom the Biſhop of *Condom* (at preſent Biſhop of *Meaux*) the Converter *Peliſſon*, and Monſieur *Nicole*, are accounted the chief Champions. They oblige you to Read over and over continually, *The Expoſition of the Catholick Faith*, of the ſaid Biſhop, to diſguiſe the *Romiſh* Religion, and paint Popery to you. The ſame Biſhop ſome Months ago Printed a Paſtoral Letter, directed to the new Converts of his Dioceſs, to the very ſame end, as to ſeduce you,

you, and hide the deformity of their falſe Religion from your view. They are not wanting in applauding the ſlender Arguments of Monſieur *Nicole*'s Book, Intitled, *The pretended Reformed convinced of Schiſm.* In that Book they pretend to prove that by way of examination, it is impoſſible to find out the Truth, and that you cannot meet with it but by ſubmitting your ſelves to the Authority of the Church. The Converter *Peliſſon* has renewed the ſame Arguments in a new Book: and this is one of the Books, which, thoſe who have been ſeduced, uſe to alledge as a ſource from whence they have drawn their knowledges. Thoſe Books ſhall be the matter of theſe Letters, not to examine them throughly, but only to ſhew you the falſhoods of theſe Doctors, the illuſions of their Sophiſms, and the fallacy of what they advance.

We do not intend to confine our ſelves within the bounds of a diſpute, becauſe we will take care to acquaint you with the moſt conſiderable tranſactions in this Perſecution; and to inform you with the paſſages of the Life, Death, and behaviour of our Martyrs and Confeſſors, the moſt ſutable to your Condition, and fitteſt for your Edification. Therefore we beſeech thoſe who know any thing of undoubted truth, to give us notice of it, that we may make it publick, for

the Edification, and the ſtrengthening of thoſe who want Conſtancy and Courage.

We will begin by the Biſhop of *Meaux*'s Paſtoral Letter to the new Converts of his Dioceſs. We paſs by his preamble, to enter and come to that which is more to our purpoſe, that is, the Method, wherewith the Reformed are brought to their pretended Converſion in *France*. *I do not wonder*, ſays Monſieur de *Meaux*, *My dear Brethren, if you are returned with ſo much forwardneſs, and in great Crowds to the Church where your Anceſtors have worſhiped God: the Principles of Chriſtianity, as I have ſaid already, and the Baptiſmal Vow did call you back inwardly to it.* Theſe Gentlemen boaſt themſelves of the eaſie Victory they have obtained in bringing back thoſe of the Reformed Religion to their Church, that is to ſay, in forcing a vaſt number of people to ſign unwillingly an Abjuration, who are fallen away from the Faith, either by threatnings, or by the fear of loſing their Eſtates, or by Torments, and the Perſecutions of Dragoons. It is true there had been in this occaſion ſome examples of weakneſs that are unaccountable and unparallel'd. We know, Brethren, theſe have been ſtumbling Blocks to you, and they endeavour to prepoſſeſs you with them. They tell you: if it was the true Religion, why do they not continue ſtedfaſt

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in it. Some of our Brethren have wrote already, to ſtrengthen you againſt this ſcandal. They ſhewed you that in the firſt Perſecutions, things were carried on here after the ſame manner, and that Apoſtaſie was near as general as at this preſent time. Since Men in thoſe Ages crowded as faſt to offer Incenſe to Idols, as in our days they have been ſeen to make an Abjuration. In all Ages there had been but few able to bear up againſt the Violences of Perſecution. The Martyrs are choſen Veſſels, into whom God pours an extraordinary meaſure of Grace, to ſtrike an aſtoniſhment into the Enemies of his Truth, to confound the weakneſs of them that fall, and to confirm the Faith of the Weak. There are Miracles, but if they were frequent and ordinary, they ſhould be no longer ſuch. If the proſpect of ſo many perſons who have yielded to the Violence of Perſecution or to the fear of it, prove a ſcandal to you; conſider not that part of our Hiſtory. But look upon the Courage and Conſtancy of your Anceſtors, who have Eſtabliſhed the Reformation in the laſt Century. Look upon the number of our Antient Martyrs in thoſe days. Conſider their Conſtancy, their Chriſtian Meekneſs, and Prayers even for their Perſecutors. Conſider with what Chriſtian reſolution they ſuffered the greateſt Torments. They have been Burnt

by

by degrees. They have ſeen their Bowels drop into the Flames before they gave up the Ghoſt. They kept them alive by Art, ſometimes many days, ſometimes ſeveral weeks, in thoſe cruel Torments, and never a repining word was heard from their Mouths. They Prayed for their Executioners. They gave God thanks. They ſung his praiſes. They called upon his Name to the laſt breath of their lives. When they tell you now adays; if your Religion was True, you would be more ſtedfaſt in it. You muſt anſwer, if our Religion was Falſe, its followers would never have had ſuch an invincible Conſtancy, and tranſcendent Love for it, as to ſuffer Death for its ſake. If this had proceeded from a refractory and ſtubborn humour, their pains and their Death had never been attended with ſo profound an Humility, with ſuch an exemplary Patience, with ſuch an accompliſhed Meekneſs, with ſuch a burning Zeal, with ſuch a ſincere Devotion, ſo an entire Submiſſion, and ſuch ſolid and apparent Joy as it was. The Spirit of Illuſion cannot work theſe things. Theſe are the Characters of the Spirit of God, theſe are the Fruits of Grace. Grace which was never given to Reprobates and Pſeudo-Martyrs.

Brethren, Theſe objects are at a diſtance and remote from you, and perhaps you will hardly reflect

reflect upon them: but it will be eaſie for you to conſider thoſe that are before your Eyes. They are able to inſtruct and ſtrengthen you againſt the ſcandal, which the forwardneſs of many in forſaking your Religion give occaſion to your Enemies to reproach you with. To this you muſt oppoſe, firſt above an hundred thouſand ſouls that departed the Kingdom within a year, not reckoning almoſt ſo many more that have come away theſe twenty years ſince the Perſecution begun. There are ſome from among them who have abandoned all their Eſtates, Honours, Preferments, Dignities, Eaſe, and other Commodities of this life. Theſe were evident proofs there was no ſuch forwardneſs, and haſte to reenter into the Boſom of the *Roman* Church. You muſt oppoſe above forty thouſand Priſoners, who lye either in the Priſons, or the Monaſteries of the Kingdom, and who choſe rather to ſuffer in them all manner of evils than to embrace the *Roman* Communion. You muſt oppoſe Perſons of Quality, as Monſieur the Marquis of *Bordage* Condemned to the Galleys, and then to a perpetual impriſonment, Monſieur the Marquis of *Muſſe*, who expects daily the ſame Judgment, Monſieur the Marquis of *Rochegude*, and his Sons, Monſieur the Marquis of *Cagny*, Monſieur *Beringhen*, and all his Family, Monſieur the Marquis

quis of *Langé*, Monſieur the Marquis of the Iſle of *Gat*, in the Fortreſs of *Angers*, and a vaſt number of other Gentlemen, who prefer either the Galleys, or the Priſons, to the Pleaſures Monſieur the Biſhop of *Meaux* invites them to, that is, to joyn themſelves with a Church wherein their Forefathers have not worſhiped God. You muſt oppoſe a conſiderable number of Martyrs and Confeſſors, whereof ſome are in Dungeons that are the very pictures of Hell, ſo deep, ſo dark, ſo noyſom, and ſo ghaſtly they are, ſome an hundred Feet deep in the Ground: ſuch is the condition of ſome of our Brethren at *Dieppe*, at the *Haure*, in the Priſons of *Humale*, and other places; concerning which we may give you in time a more particular account. You muſt oppoſe above ſix hundred perſons who are actually chained in the Galleys for their Religion. This is an account made up not by Hyperbolical exaggeration, but given by a *Roman* Catholick Officer, imployed in Maritime affairs, and living at *Marſellis*. We have his Letter, and (without making mention of his name) in time we may produce it. Amongſt others, this is one Article. *Here are ſix hundred Slaves of the Reformed Religion, who by their patience move the moſt unmerciful Galleys Captains to compaſſion.* The number of them muſt be very much increaſed ſince that time, for the

Letter

Letter is dated from *Marſeillis*, *June* 27. 1686. that is to ſay above two mont hs ſince; aud doubtleſs a great many more are gone thither; and indeed we hear that ſome ſay there are two thouſand, ſome give out four thouſand. The famous Monſieur *Lewis de Maralles*, Advocate of St. *Menehoud*, was not as yet gone there, for he departed from *Paris* in Fetters but the 20th. of *July*, and came at *Dijon* but the 30th. of the ſame month; from whence at laſt he was brought to *Marſeillis*, laden with a Chain of fifty pound weight, and troubled with a violent Feaver that never ceaſed during the whole Journey. He is a Confeſſor of Jeſus Chriſt, whom the whole City of *Paris* has ſeen at the *Tournelle* (a Juſtice-Hall) over-laden with Fetters of an extraordinary weight, and Preaching from the midſt thereof. All *France* has its Eyes fixed on him, as upon the greateſt example of Courage, of Piety, and Nicety of Conſcience our Age hath ſeen. We ſhall give you one day the Hiſtory of his Confeſſion, and lay open to your view the Sentiments of his Soul by his own Letters, in which you ſhall perceive the Spirit and the Character of the Antient Martyrs. He is one of the moſt eminent Confeſſors; but not the only, and God raiſes ſome every day. The ſame Sea Officer who wrote from *Marſeillis*, that there were ſix hundred Galley Proteſtant Slaves, adds, *Fifteen*

days ſince Monſieur de Lezan, *a Gentleman of Quality, was Condemned to the Gallies upon a very ſlight accuſation,* viz. *for being preſent at ſome Religious Aſſembly. The next day they put ſeveral perſons to the Rack, in order to draw an Accuſation from them againſt perſons of Quality. Theſe unhappy wretches ſuſtained the ordinary, and extraordinary Rack, with a Conſtancy that terrified the Judges, and made the Executioner tender hearted to ſuch a degree, that the Provoſt was forced to be all the while in a threatning poſture to make him turn the wheel of the Rack. There was among them a Student in Divinity, Native of* Noyon *in* Picardy. Theſe are matters of Fact, the truth of which ought not to be queſtioned, ſince they are atteſted by a perſon of a contrary perſuaſion, who is in the Country, and upon the places where theſe Cruelties are practiſed. Theſe are Confeſſors who witneſs that the *Romiſh* Church doth not find that eaſineſs which the Biſhop of *Meaux* brags of, in making the Reformed re-enter into its Communion. Theſe are examples of Conſtancy well worth a ſerious conſideration; ſince it is far eaſier to ſuffer Death than the ordinary and extraordinary Rack: and theſe famous Confeſſors may juſtly be ſtyled Martyrs. But will you oppoſe to the eaſie victory the Converters boaſt of, and which they ſet out with ſo much noiſe and oſtentation to entice you into

into the *Roman* Church; will you I say oppose to these Seducers some Martyrs, who are without exception such? Oppose Monsieur *Teissier Viguier*, of *Durford* in the lower *Languedoc*, who was hanged some months ago in a place called *Lasalle*, only for having served God in some publick Assembly. *Gisot*, who was Burnt alive at *Nerac*: this poor Gentleman through infirmity signed to an Abjuration, either out of fear, or by reason of the Dragoons Persecutions, or it may be through the feebleness of old Age; (for he was near fourscore years old,) being fallen sick, God restored him his former Zeal, to make him obtain the glorious Crown of Martyrdom; he denied to take the Communion in the *Roman* way, and declared he recanted the unhappy Abjuration drawn from him by force. The Priest to put in execution the sentence, that enjoyns to to give the Communion to all sick persons, whatever it cost, forced him to receive the Host, and put it into his Mouth; the old Man spit it out according to his duty, and upon this he was Condemned to the Fire to be burnt alive: he went to this horrid torment with the like joy as did the Holy Martyrs; he was tyed to the Stake without any disturbance of mind; he sung the praises of God in the midst of the flames to the very last breath; and this Constancy made so strong

an impreſſion upon the minds of all the Inhabitants of *Nerac*, and ſtruck ſo great a terror into the Perſecutors Breaſts, that they durſt not put in execution the like Sentence, given againſt one called *Fabrieres*, of the ſame Town and Country, Condemned alſo to be burnt alive, for having as the aforeſaid *Giſot* ſpit out the Hoſt put into his Mouth by force. We have not heard yet that the Sentence had been Executed; when it ſhall be ſo, we ſhall acquaint you with it. We have another Martyr of an higher order, *viz.* Monſieur *Ray* of *Niſmes*, Student in Divinity, who after having Preached eight or nine months in the lower *Languedoc*, has been apprehended and Condemned to Death, and was Executed at *Baucaire* the 7th. of *Auguſt*. The Circumſtances of his Martyrdom, his Courage, his Anſwers, his Piety are too eminent and extraordinary to be confined in this narrow compaſs. We will give you an account of them in the ſeries of this Hiſtory, when we ſhall have gathered from credible Hands, and faithful Memoires, all the parts of the Hiſtory relating to this glorious Martyr.

Here are already many things, Brethren, for you to oppoſe to this Sentence of Monſieur of *Meaux*, *viz. I do not wonder you are come again thronging, and with ſo much forwardneſs to our Church.* But this is not all: tell him for a certain truth,

truth, againſt his pretended forwardneſs, that for theſe four months paſt in the *Lower Languedoc*, in a Country called *Cevennes*, and other neighbouring places, they continue to aſſemble almoſt every day, in the Woods, Caverns, and among the Rocks. The Dragoons, who commonly find them out, make a ſlaughter of them according to their order. They kill, they hang, and drag them into Priſons; but this avails nothing. Let what will be the conſequence, they continue to aſſemble. In the Month of *June* laſt, towards the latter end, the Dragoons having found out a Congregation near *Niſmes*, killed many upon the ſpot, and hung four upon the Trees. Theſe Executioners withdrew, thinking theſe Servants of God durſt not come again to the ſame place. But two hours after another Congregation was form'd in the very ſame place, about the dead Bodies, and in ſight of the Corps hanging upon the top of the Rocks. There is no week but the like Congregations are made, and the like Maſſacres perpetrated. They give an account of about threeſcore perſons who have been maſſacred in a Congregation made between the Towns of *Uſes* and *Bagnols* in the beginning of *July*. It is reported ſome Women were raviſhed, and ſome others had their Bellies rip'd open. But we keep the particulars of theſe matters of fact for another time. For you may

may be assured we shall write nothing but what is certain, and of an undoubted truth. Wherefore we have chosen rather to put off the edification you ought to receive from the stedfastness and constancy of our Martyrs and Confessors, than to set down some things as true, which may hereafter prove doubtful or false. It is enough at present to shew the Bishop of *Meaux* and his Brethren, they have as yet no great reason to boast themselves, as if they had obtain'd an easie conquest and victory over us. Too soon they begin to triumph, not being as yet advanced so far as they imagine themselves to be; we see already the vanity of his prediction, *Within four months no mention should be made of* Huguenots *in* France. These fair Designs are brought to nought, and the difficulty will be found at the end.

As for you, Brethren, the Discourses we have entertained you with, and the Objects we have laid before your eyes, ought to make you ashamed if you have been so weak as to fall, and excite you to redouble your stedfastness if you continue as yet standing. But let us see an Article more of the Bishop of *Meaux* Pastoral Letter.

None of you, says he, has sustained violence, either in his person, or in his estate, let them not bring you those deceitful Letters, which Strangers, under the notion of Ministers direct, under the Title of Pastoral

Letters to the Proteſtants in France, *fallen by the violence of the Torments. Beſides that they are written by ſome Men who could never prove their Miſſion, thoſe Letters do not concern you at all; far from having ſuffered any Torments, you never heard a word of them. I hear ſay the ſame from the reſt of the Biſhops; but for you, Brethren, I ſpeak nothing but what you acknowledge as well as I; you are come quietly to us, and you know it.* There are ſome Objects, which Men can never make themſelves familiar with. It is in vain to look upon them, they are always the ſame, and they ever appear like Prodigies; *Maimbourg*, *Varillas*, *Brueys*, and a great number of others have been ſo bold as to ſay, that the Converſions were made without any violence. They have been anſwered upon this matter, and put to their laſt ſhifts ſo far as to cover with ſhame impudence it ſelf. But this is to waſh a Blackmore white. Theſe Gentlemen have put on a brazen Forehead, and are reſolved never to bluſh at any thing. Judge your ſelves by this pattern of the good faith and ſincerity of your Converters. You, who have ſeen your Eſtates conſumed and deſtroyed, your Bodies abuſed, your Neighbours dragged into Priſons, your poor Wifes ſhaved, and clapped into Nunneries, the faithful Servants of God caſt into Dungeons full of ſtench and corruption. Some others were carried into Priſons, where the Water

run

run under feet; but to keep them from falling into the precipice, they ſet them upon ſmall narrow Boards, upon which they were toſſed night and day. Others have been burnt and roaſted. Others have been put out of their Wits, and become mad, for being kept awake without any reſt.

All *France* has ſeen it: all *Europe* is witneſs of it: and yet they have the boldneſs to affirm the contrary of what your ſelves are eye-witneſſes. Do you think theſe Gentlemen dare not tell you lies upon the Centuries paſt, when they entertain you concerning the Tradition, and what has been ſaid and done a thouſand or twelve hundred years ago, ſince they have no manner of reſpect for preſent truths, and matters of fact, whereof there are almoſt as many Witneſſes, as Men alive upon earth. In the name of God reflect upon theſe things, and conſider, when they forbid you an examination, when they tell you you muſt believe the Church, that is, theſe falſe Doctors who ſpeak to you, you muſt give credit to what they ſay without knowledge: Conſider, I ſay, if there is any ſafety to truſt people who are devoted and given up to lying, and who have put off all manner of ſhame and baſhfulneſs.

Monſieur the Biſhop of *Meaux* has heard from all the Biſhops, there was no Violence practiſed in all their Dioceſſes. I would fain know what

Definition these Gentlemen give of violence, and what they call Torments. Among these Bishops the Bishop of *Aubun* could give the lie to the Bishop of *Meaux*; for he could not say as he did, *viz. That the Inhabitants of his Dioceſs never heard one word of torments.* He went attended with some Executioners to the Lady S. *Hadré Montbrun*, Widow of an illustrious General, who had the honor to command in chief the King's and the *Venetians* Armies with so much Glory. This Bishop, I say, attended by some Missionaries and a Provost, who brought with him two or three Executioners, furnished with all the Instruments of the Rack and Torture, could not make good the Bishop of *Meaux* assertion. If this is false, why do they not convince the Servants and the Officers of that House of Falshood, who have seen it, who told it, and who have written of it? But the Bishop of *Meaux* hath never done, nor seen any thing like it in his Dioceſs. Suppose this be true, it is not strange, and he hath no great reason to wish himself joy for it; since *Paris*, and the neigbouring places were the last that felt the smart of the Persecution. All *France* was stricken with terror, bathed in tears, and red with blood; *Paris* and *Brie* saw nothing round about, but sanguinary Troops, and Emissaries laden with the Spoils of the Reformed, and covered with their blood;

what wonder is it then, if these dreadful Objects overcame them without approaching them? since the fear of an imminent danger doth as much terrifie us as the immediate sense of a present evil inflicted upon us; nay, some who sunk under the apprehensions of punishment, with courage sustained it when it was inflicted. The Dragoons of *Bearn*, of *Aquitain*, of *Poicton*, of *Languedoc*, of *Normandy* made Conversions for the Bishop of *Meaux*. After this let him boast himself if he can of his easie Converts.

But I am weary to confute such impudences by matters of fact, which our Persecutors deny, and by such Witnesses as they reject. But let us see, whether Monsieur *Meaux* will contradict himself. He wrote his Pastoral Letter in *April* last, a little while before Easter, to invite and prepare the new Converts to the next Communion; and exactly at the very same time he wrote to one of his Dioceses the following Letter, which is come to hand.

Meaux, April 3. 1686.

Monsieur,

I Continue to write to you without being discouraged at the Answer you made to my first Letter; I did too well perceive a strange Character, and a Ministers Style in it to attribute it to you.

you. In a word, I found that it proceeded not from a Judgment ſuch as yours. But ſuppoſe it did, yet would I not ceaſe to invite you to a return. I ſaw in a Letter you wrote to Madam *V*... that the true Church doth not perſecute. What do you mean by that, Sir? Do you underſtand that the Church it ſelf doth never make uſe of Force? It is very true, ſince the Church has but ſpiritual Arms. Do you mean that the Princes, who are the Sons of the Church, ought never to draw the Sword God has put into their hands, to deſtroy his Enemies? Will you dare ſay that againſt the Judgment of your own Doctors themſelves, who have maintained by ſo many Books, that the Republick of *Geneva* could, and ought to condemn *Servetus* to the Fire, for having denyed the Divinity of the Son of God? But without alledging any Examples, and the authority of your Doctors, tell me in what place of the Scriptures Hereticks and Schiſmaticks are excepted out of the number of thoſe Malefactors againſt whom S. *Paul* ſays, God himſelf has armed the Princes? And if you would not allow Chriſtian Princes the puniſhing of ſuch heinous Crimes, becauſe injurious to God, muſt not they puniſh them becauſe they are the occaſion of trouble and ſedition in the Government? Do you not ſee clearly that you are grounded upon a falſe

Principle? And if it was true, then were the *Arians*, the *Neſtorians*, the *Pelagians* in the right againſt the Church, ſince it were they who were perſecuted and baniſhed, and the Catholicks thoſe who then perſecuted and baniſhed them. And at this preſent time the Catholicks who are puniſhed with death in *Sweedland*, and in many other Kingdoms ſhould be in the right againſt thoſe that call themſelves Evangelical, and each of them at his turn ſhould be in the right and in the wrong, in the right in one place, and in the wrong in another, and Religion would depend upon uncertainties. But this is too much upon this Subject to convince as good a Wit as yours. Know only, that when it pleaſes God to leave us to our own thoughts, the beſt Judgments are biaſſed with the leaſt appearances. The fear of worſhiping Bread ſtands (according to your prejudice) upon better grounds. Conſider in the mean while (without beginning a Controverſie, that muſt needs go beyond the bounds of a Letter) conſider, I ſay, it was the like fear that cauſed the *Arrians*, and the Diſciples of *Paul* of *Samoſatus*, to ſay that they would not give the Divine Honors to a Man, to a Child, to a Creature what perfections and privileges ſoever ſhe was endowed with. It was human reaſon, ſenſes and prejudices that inſpired them with thoſe empty fears. Take care that your

Religion

Religion (after their example) doth not too much depend upon the ſenſes and human reaſon, in a like caſe, and that your non-compliance doth not proceed from an habit to follow their Dictates. However you ſee your Reformers have done nothing elſe but renewing the quarrels ended ſix hundred years ago, when *Berengarius* ſtirred them, and if you queſtion the judgment given againſt him, the others with as much reaſon may queſtion all the preceding Councils; and here we are to examin again, all that has been Decreed, as if we did but now become Chriſtians, and if all that our Fathers had Decreed was good for nothing: this ſhews in a word, that if Chriſtians, when they cannot agree upon the ſence of the Scripture, do not acknowledge a ſpeaking and living Authority, to which they ſubmit themſelves, the Chriſtian Church is certainly the weakeſt of all the Societies in the World, the moſt expoſed to deſperate and remedileſs diviſions to the Novators, and factious Sectaries of all ſorts. This is an Objection which your Miniſters with all their ſubtilty could never Anſwer; they ſatisfie themſelves when they alledge ſome examples, wherewith they pretend to prove the Councils have not always well determined. All thoſe examples are falſe or ill alledged; and in very little time you that are ingenious might be con-

vinced of it. You receive things with too much credulity, without ever examining them: but without insisting longer upon these things, consider only, if it is likely that God, who has permitted there should be so many depths in the Scripture, and that many Schisms should spring from thence among those who make profession of it, consider, I say, if God has left no means to his Church to compound them, and if there is no other remedy to heal Divisions, but to let every one believe according to his fancy, and so lead Men by degrees to the indifferency of Religion, which is the greatest of all evils. Think, Sir, Think upon this, Consult your own thoughts, and not your Ministers subtilties, who, let what will come of it, are resolved to defend their prejudices, rather than be accounted false Teachers. Nay, this is not enough, ponderate these things; pass by the places where the Scripture appears a little intricated and difficult. It is better to see the simplicity of a Brother endeavouring to win his Brother, than the neatness of an elaborated Discourse. Come, and be assured that I will do all for your person, which I esteem, which is dear to me, and that I am heartily

Your, &c. Thus signed,

J. Benigne, Bishop of *Meaux*.

Having

Having impoſed the neceſſity upon our ſelves not to go beyond this Leaf: we put off our reflections upon this Letter, till our next, which we ſhall give you in a few days; becauſe this is only as a Preface to the reſt. In mean while we recommend you to the Grace of God, and to his Mercy. *Amen.*

September, 1.
1686.

FINIS.